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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides extension personnel with basic information on how to help handicapped individuals through referral to the appropriate service provider. A series of steps is suggested for locating help for a client when no appropriate service provider can be readily located. Lists are then presented of possible sources of help in these areas: counseling, vocational assistance, legal services, educational advice, recreational programs, and medical services and evaluations. Next are listed names and addresses of some national agencies and organizations that can provide information about their organizations and may have publications available. Six examples of cases encountered by extension agents are included. (YLB)

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AN EXTENSION WORKER'S GUIDE TO SERVING THE HANDICAPPED

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Cooperative Extension Project for the Handicapped

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PROVIDING SERVICE TO THE HANDICAPPED THROUGH EXTENSION

Extension personnel are to provide services to all people, including minorities and the handicapped, however, it is not intended that the Extension worker provide service outside their area of expertise to each handicapped individual. That would be unrealistic since there are service providers in the state who are funded and trained to provide specific services. In most cases, the Extension worker will simply refer the indivdual to the appropriate service provider, and serve as an advocate for the client. In some instances he/she may need to personally accompany the clients to assist them in properly completing applications for services.

There will be times when an appropriate service provider cannot be readily located. When this occurs, the Extension worker must become a detective of sorts.

- What is the need? Make a list of all the handicapped persons needs.
- Who is already helping? Some agencies may already be working with the person.
- Are there organizations you might have overlooked? Fraternal organizations often donate monies or time to assist the underprivileged. The church to which the person belongs is a very good source of assistance.
- If there is not an appropriate service provider locally, consider agencies on the state level. The State Social Service Family Health Branch, State Extension Handicapped Specialist, State Medical Associations, etc. can either provide direct service or refer you to persons or agencies who can provide the service.
- City and county officials are possible sources of help, especially in the situation where families are living in unhealthy environments.
- If legal assistance is needed contact a local attorney or the Legal Services for the Handicapped in your state.
- If there is not a parent group in your area, contact the state association representing the handicap you are interested in. It has been shown again and again that a group of organized parents can often do more to help their handicapped children receive their legal rights, than can professionals fighting in their behalf.

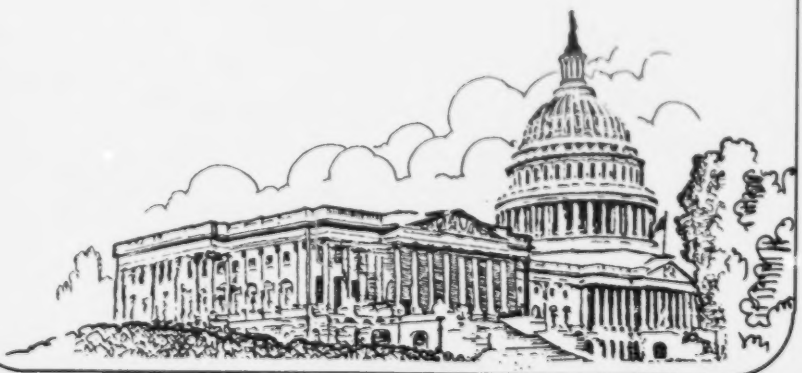
Where to go for:

COUNSELING

The Division of Family Services
The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.
Local Mental Health Center
Counseling centers and clinics listed under the specific service needed, i.e., alcohol, drug, mental, family, etc.

VOCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

- Contact the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation if the person is handicapped and is finding it difficult to obtain employment. They may be able to place the handicapped person on a job.
- The Department of Employment Security or Job Service has programs which provide on the job training. The handicapped person may qualify for one of these programs.
- Churches often have employment programs for their members.
- Check with private employment offices.



LEGAL SERVICES

Contact the Legal Center for the Handicapped in your state. They provide consultation and referral.

If there are discrimination problems your senator or representative may be willing to intervene.

Contact your county attorney. He or attorneys of his acquaintance may provide help to the handicapped.

Contact your local parent group. A group of parents can be very effective in getting services which the handicapped person is entitled to by law.

EDUCATIONAL ADVICE

0-5 years - State Preschool Programs - contact Division of Family Services
Head Start/Home Start

5-21 years - Superintendent or Director of Pupil Personnel.

Training centers and sheltered workshops (for severely retarded persons who cannot function independently at home or on the job). The Division of Family Services or the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation may be able to recommend appropriate facilities.

Technical Colleges (special programs for those who didn't finish high school).

College -- Contact Student Service Centers for the Handicapped.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

Special Olympics - a full recreational program for the handicapped - check with Special Education Department of the nearest college or University schedule and information.

Day Care Centers for Adults

Senior Citizen Centers - Those center offer a variety of programs in which the handicapped can participate.

Easter Seal Programs for the Handicapped - Sponsor special programs such as horseback riding for the handicapped.

Muscular Dystrophy Association

Multiple Scleorsis Society

Red Cross -- Contact these agencies to find out what recreational programs might be available in your area.

MEDICAL SERVICES AND EVALUATIONS

Local Physicians

State Medical and Dental Associations

Children's Medical Centers

County and State Health Departments

Local hospitals

University Affiliated Treatment Centers of the Developmentally Disabled

If you are unable to find an agency on a local or state level to meet your needs, check with national agencies. They can provide information about their organizations and often have very helpful publications available. Examples of some national agencies and organizations include:

ACTION
806 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20525
(202) 254-3120
An agency for volunteer service includes the Peace Corps, VISTA, Foster Grandparents Program, National Student Volunteers, and Retired Senior Volunteers

Alexander Graham Bell
Association for the Deaf
3417 Volta Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

American Dental Association
211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611

American Speech-Language and
Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Arthritis Foundation
3400 Peachtree Rd., N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30326

Association for Children with
Learning Disabilities
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15234

Council of Home Health
Agencies and Community Health
Services
National League for Nursing
10 Columbus Circle
New York, NY 10019
(212) 582-1022

Down's Syndrome Congress
1802 Johnson Drive
Normal, Illinois 61761

Epilepsy Foundation of
America
Material Service Center
1828 L Street, N.W.
Suite 406
Washington, D.C. 20036

March of Dimes
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
P.O. Box 2000
White Plains, NY 10605

Muscular Dystrophy
Association
810 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019

National Association for
Retarded Citizens
2709 Avenue E East
P.O. Box 6109
Arlington, Texas 76011

National Association for
Visually Handicapped
305 East 24th Street
New York, NY 10010

National Center for Law and
the Handicapped, Inc.
1235 North Eddy Street
South Bend, Indiana 46617

National Council of Senior
Citizens
1511 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 347-8800

Disabled American Veterans
P.O. Box 14301
Cinncinati, OH 45214
National Easter Seal Society
2023 West Ogden Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60612
(312) 243-8400

National Federation of the Blind
1800 Johnson Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

National Mental Health Association
1800 North Kent Street
Rosslyn Station
Arlington, Virginia 22209
(803) 528-6405

Presidents Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
1111 20th Street, N.W.
Room 635
Washington, D.C. 20036

The National Association of the Deaf
814 Thayer Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
(301) 587-1778

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Inc.
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017
(212) 986-3240

United Cerebral Palsy
66 East 34th Street
New York, NY 10016
(212) 889-6655

U. S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C. 20201

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410

EXAMPLES OF CASES ENCOUNTERED BY EXTENSION AGENTS:

Case 1. A young couple in a rural area gave birth to a child with Down's Syndrome (Mongoloid). They were advised by their family doctor to place the child in an institution as soon as possible. This was not something they wanted to do. The Extension agent encouraged these parents to go to the local mental health center for counseling to help them cope with this difficult situation and also referred them to medical and educational specialists in the nearest city who gave the child a series of tests.

When the child had been evaluated and the doctors, nurses, and other therapists involved had determined his current level of functioning, the child began an infant

stimulation training program. The Extension agent contacted the local public health nurse who worked with the parents to teach them how to use the training program effectively to help their child at home.

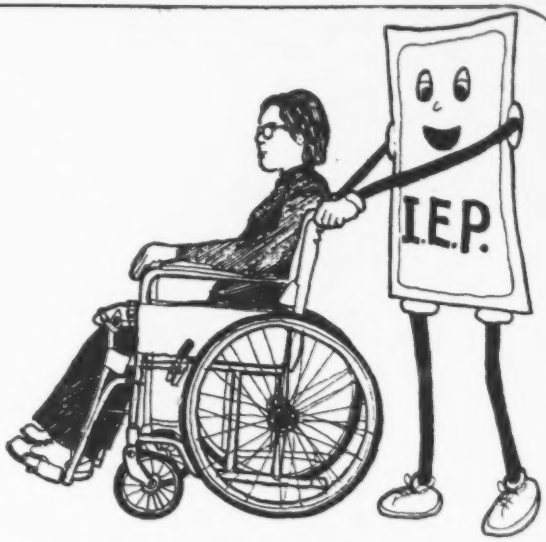
At least once a month the Extension agent contacted the parents and the service providers who were currently working with the family, offering support and assistance with any new problems. When the child was five, the Extension agent advised the parents that he was protected by Public Law 94-142 which ensured his right to an appropriate, individualized education, and pointed out that even if their area did not have a special school for severely retarded children, the local school district was obligated to develop a special program designed to teach their child in a manner that would maximize his potential development.

The parents were concerned about their child's future as an adult. The Extension agent presented the various options open to retarded adults such as sheltered workshops, group homes, vocational training, possible employment opportunites and explained how important it was for them to help prepare their child now by working with him to gain the social skills and independent living skills necessary for him to take advantage of available opportunities.

Case 2. A child in a special education program at an elementary school did not seem to be progressing at all. The parents wanted to know what they could do to help him.

The Extension agent discovered the parents were not familiar with Public Law 94-142, which guarantees every person an appropriate, individualized education at public expense, and referred them to the following sources:

- The teacher, the principal, the director of pupil, personnel, or the superintendent of schools.
- Legal Center for the Handicapped
- Department of Special Education, State Board of Education
- State Association for Retarded Citizens (or local chapters).
- Their County Attorney
- State Bar Association: To ask if they had a list of attorneys in their area who did work for the disadvantaged, and to learn more about how this law applied to their child.



The parents contacted the school and requested a special IEP (Individualized Education Program) meeting to review the child's program. At that time, the parents talked with the teachers who worked with their child and tried to determine why he was not progressing.

Because the parents had talked to some of the people listed above, they had some idea of what they thought their child could do and what they wanted to be put into his program as goals. The school reviewed the child's current programs and suggested alternate ways of helping him. The law requires that the parent must sign the IEP form before the school can implement a program. If there had been a dispute about his educational program, a due process hearing could have been requested. After the IEP had been signed the parents followed the child's school program carefully and requested an IEP review any time they felt there was need for further discussion.

In this case, the Extension agent acted as an advocate for the child and his family by supplying the appropriate information.

Case 3. A young man had a crippling disease which required him to use a wheelchair in order to get around. He had above-average intelligence and had graduated from

high school. His parents had been willing to spend the time necessary to get him to and from school, and as laws ensuring educational rights for the handicapped were enacted, the schools had made every effort to arrange classrooms in areas which were accessible to him. Students were helpful in getting him into areas where he had to be lifted.

He desired to go on to get a college degree. His family feared that his handicap made this aspiration quite impractical.

The Extension agent informed the family of the services available to students who are physically handicapped, for example:

* Division of Vocational Rehabiliation: This agency provides counseling, financial assistance, and may even be able to provide funds for adaptive equipment to help students get around campus more efficiently. This might include an electric wheelchair, tape recorder for notetaking, or even equipping the family van with a ramp and hand brakes so the handicapped person could drive himself to school.

* Assistance Payments: If the handicapped student lives away from home he may qualify for one or more of the services provided by Assistance Payments. This may include medical care, disability income, and/or food stamps.

* Most colleges and universities have a Handicapped Student Center. These Centers will help arrange student counseling for registration and even arrange to have classrooms moved when necessary. They can also help the student locate wheelchair pushers, notetakers, tutors, and provide other special services which might be needed.

* Many large corporations visit the campuses each Spring to interview college seniors who are handicapped. When handicapped individuals have been hired, they may be sent to training centers where they can learn to perform their jobs using whatever adaptive equipment if necessary. For example, a blind person may be trained to do his work using instructions that have been brailled.

The parents investigated and found that there were enough support services available that a college education was possible and a career which could be rewarding and fulfilling was not an impractical aspiration.

The Extension agent helped contact the various agencies and acted as an advocate to make sure the young man received the services that would help him achieve his goals.

Case 4. A young girl had a physical disability which also detracted from her appearance. She had graduated from high school, had excellent type and shorthand skills, but had so far been unsuccessful in obtaining work as a secretary.

The Extension agent explained Vocational Rehabilitation Acts Section 503 and 504 to her so that she knew what her rights were under that law.

The agent also told her about the following possible sources she could turn to for help:

- Since she did not live with her parents she could check with Assistance Payments to see if she qualified for Social Security Disability Income, Food Stamps, or Medicaid. These services are available to those who qualify, making it possible for them to have sufficient income to live while they are preparing themselves for employment which will eventually enable them to live without assistance or aid. Medicaid could make possible corrective surgery which would help her physical appearance.

- The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation might be able to provide assistance. They could help by referring her to possible job situations, or provide tuition for additional education or job training.

- If the physical disability was correctable, it would be worth her time to seek competent medical advice. She may ask her physician to refer her to a University Medical Center where she could be seen by a specialist in the field of her particular disability.

- She had suffered loss of self-esteem as a result of the difficulty in obtaining employment, and had grown up with a feeling of inferiority. By contacting her local mental health association, the Division of Family services in her area, or her own physician who could make a referral, she could arrange for mental health counseling.

- The Office of Economic Opportunity might be able to intervene in her behalf.

- The Legal Center for the Handicapped would be able to provide her with consultation and referral services.

Case 5. A young girl born deaf was sheltered throughout her pre-school and school years. When she was in her late teens, she was contacted by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation regarding possible training programs to make her employable. She was placed in a Sheltered Workshop where she was able to learn some vocational skills. She also learned appropriate job-related behaviors such as arriving at work on time and keeping her breaks according to schedule. She was taught hygiene and grooming and developed more self-confidence.

She was assisted in locating an apartment and roommate and since she was now living independently and was eligible for Disability Income, Food Stamps, and

Medicaid. The Extension agent assisted her in applying for these benefits through Assistance Payments.

She was then placed on a job as a dishwasher. She was soon discharged because she was suffering from a dislocated shoulder which caused so much pain that she could not perform her duties.

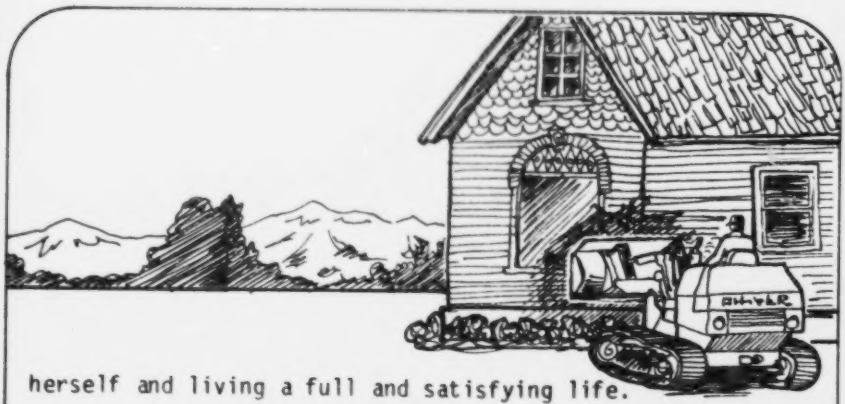
The Extension agent was contacted by Vocational Rehabilitation to see what might be done. As consultation was arranged with an orthopedic surgeon who examined and tested the girl and subsequently performed surgery. She recuperated in her apartment for a month during which time she was visited each morning by the public health nurse who assisted her with bathing and dressing and helped her with breakfast. In the afternoons a homemaker from the Division of Family Services came to make sure that she had her noon meal and straightened up the apartment. The homemaker and the girl wrote notes to each other since that was the only way to communicate.

Her religious leaders were contacted and members of her church visited her frequently to see what they could do to help.

After her recuperation she returned to the sheltered workshop. She was suffering some emotional problems resulting from the fact that she wanted to move to the city (where she had previously lived and worked) and her family did not support the idea. The sheltered workshop provided counseling for her for several months and she began to realize that she had to make decisions on her own and not vascillate back and forth regarding what she wanted to do. She was also counseled in ways she might maintain a better relationship with her roommate, a mildly retarded young woman.

After the Extension agent and the other members of the team had worked with the young girl for a year and a half, she made the decision to move to the city. Through Vocational Rehabilitation she was able to obtain a job, find an apartment, and a roommate. The Extension agent put her in contact with a group of deaf adults who attended a special branch of her own church. The Extension Home Economist Nutrition Aide began regular visits to teach proper nutrition and cooking skills.

Recently she married a partially deaf man and together they are living quite independently. They will always need the support of the agencies that were helpful in the past. But she will not be dependent on her family, as is the case far too often. However, she is working, helping to support



herself and living a full and satisfying life.

Case 6. The Extension Home Economist Nutrition Aide who had been visiting a home for some time to teach nutrition and cooking to a mildly retarded mother sought help from the Cooperative Extension Project for the Handicapped. She reported that the family was living in a house that was infested with rats and that two attempts at weatherizing the house had failed. The family was living in very unhealthy conditions, making it difficult for the Nutrition Aide to perform her job properly.

A home visit was arranged and the Extension agent for the handicapped met with the family to assess their needs. The needs of the family were as follows:

- Improve the housing conditions for the family.
- Arrange for an evaluation of a three year old girl who did not talk.

Housing -- Several efforts were made to obtain low income housing for this family. Although a number of programs are available for low income families, this family did not meet the requirements. Finally, the Extension agent contacted the Mayor and asked if he could do anything to help this family. He immediately expressed concern and said he would meet with the city council to discuss the problem. From that point, the mayor became the catalyst for solving the housing problem. He was able to obtain funds from sister communities throughout the state, and other sources, to enable them to purchase a mobile home. The County Commissioners agreed to donate their employees and equipment to demolish the old home. The mayor made arrangements for the family to have temporary housing while the mobile home was being relocated on their lot. The church leaders were helpful in getting the family moved. They later assisted the family in purchasing a washer and dryer and in planting grass and shrubs.

The Child -- Arrangements were made to have the three year old girl tested to determine her level of functioning. It was determined that the child was not retarded, but was very much in need of speech therapy and a pre-school program to provide the training and development she could not get at home. Extension arranged with the Speech Therapy Department at the local university to waive fees because of the family's low income. They also contacted the family's church leader who agreed to provide the gasoline which was needed to transport the child three times each week to the University for speech therapy. The Home Start staff arranged for a teacher to work with the child in the home until she became eligible (at age 4) for Head Start. The mother became active in the parent group of the Head Start/Home Start program which did much to increase her self-esteem.

Now the family lives rather independently, with a team of service providers who are available to help when necessary. The nutrition aide continues her visits and the housekeeping and cooking skills of the mother improve constantly. The Extension agent makes contact each quarter with those who are working with the child to make sure that her training continues. The Mayor maintains contact with the family to see that they are getting along all right. And the church leaders are diligent in seeing that the family does not have to want for necessities.

Services which were being provided previously are continuing. These include the WIC nutrition program through the public health nurse, which provides vouchers for various types of nutritional foods for the child. The family receives services from Assistance Payments which provides Food Stamps, Disability Income and Medicaid.

It should be noted that beyond checking to see that the family was receiving these benefits, for which they qualified, no other contact was made. This was in keeping with the philosophy that Extension does not wish to duplicate any existing services. Rather, they determine what is being done, and what is not being done. Then they begin to contact service providers who can assist the family. Finally, when all available resources have been utilized, Extension goes the extra mile, to locate help through whatever source they can find available.

Prepared and distributed by and/or under the direction of the Cooperative Extension Project for the Handicapped, Exceptional Child Center, Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322.

Booklets available from Cooperative Extension Project for the Handicapped:

1) An Extension Workers Guide to Serving the Handicapped.
2) Cooperative Extension Project for the Handicapped Administrative and Organizational Manual.
3) An Overview of Handicapping Conditions.
4) Involving the Handicapped in 4-H.
5) Eliminating Architectural Barriers in the Community.
6) Organizing Parents of the Handicapped.
7) A Look at Some Myths Regarding Handicapped Individuals.
8) Laws and the Handicapped.
9) 4-H for the Handicapped in Institutions.
10) 4-H for the Handicapped Activities Handbook.

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